



ASSIST-U YOUR EAP 800.750.5595

Managing Holiday Stress During Economic Hard Times

While there is no question that these financially difficult times have been anxiety-provoking, there are many ways that you can take care of your emotional health.

Remember that the holidays should not be about giving expensive gifts and extravagant parties, but an opportunity to connect with family and friends. One way to reduce stress in these lean times is to find ways of entertaining that help you stay on budget. There are several ways to do this:

- **Keep it simple-** whether inviting guests to a party or buying gifts, it doesn't have to be lavish
- **Buy gift cards-** It is a good way to stay within budget and track spending and it avoids the time and hassle of returning or exchanging gifts
- **Drawing names for gift exchanges-** When faced with the dilemma of giving gifts to lots of family or co-workers, it is a way for everyone to avoid excessive spending and decrease stress levels
- **Invite friends and family to participate in a potluck dinner-** Sometimes the best way to connect is sharing and socializing while cooking; this way everyone can participate in a social event as well as the cost
- **Recycle Holiday Decorations or Make Something Simple-** We often amass so many decorations for the season, reconsider if it is really necessary to buy a new table cloth for the holiday celebration. Creating hand-made wreaths or garlands (i.e. pop corn and cranberries) can be more fun
- **Talk about it-** It may be important to encourage and remind friends that, like eating healthy and managing stress, avoiding financial crisis is another way to take care of ourselves

Remember the plan is to take care of you.

- Get plenty of rest and don't over do
- Avoid overeating and drinking too much
- Watch your expectations
- Avoid being isolated
- If you have had a personal loss, don't feel you have to celebrate

